It is critical that we not make this into a political tug of war at a time when there is consensus in the scientific community, environmentalists, the professionals who work in disaster mitigation about what will work, what will make things better, what will keep people out of harm's way. We need to work cooperatively to make our communities more livable with a better match between private responsibility and government policy at all levels.

ARSENIC STANDARDS IN DRINKING WATER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I have been concerned about attacks made on the Bush administration for their decision to not immediately implement the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to reduce the standard on arsenic in drinking water from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion until further research and data is provided. Since nearly everyone has heard of individuals being poisoned with arsenic, it is assumed that any amount of arsenic is detrimental and that not immediately implementing a lower standard of 10 parts per billion is anti-environment and insensitive to human health concerns. The 50 parts per billion standard has been in effect since 1942, and there is no sound evidence that having a standard of 50 parts per billion has led to increased health problems in the United States.

Most people are not aware of the fact that arsenic is a naturally-occurring substance and is present in the groundwater in most western States and parts of the Midwest and even some parts of New England. It is not put there by pesticides, fertilizers or human beings. Ninety-seven percent of the communities exceeding the 10 parts per billion of arsenic in their water supplies are small towns with populations of less than 10,000 people. There are 69 such communities in the State of Nebraska that exceed 10 parts per billion of arsenic. Nearly all of these are small rural communities, and most of them have only 11 to 15 parts per billion of arsenic in their groundwater. In order to meet the 10 parts per billion standard, nearly all of these communities would have to be assessed several hundred dollars per family and several million dollars per community.

Much of the EPA reasoning for dropping the arsenic standards to 10 parts per billion has been extrapolated from studies done in Taiwan where water contains an average arsenic level of 250 parts per billion. Some health problems have been detected as a result of the high levels of arsenic in Taiwan. Now, if there is a linear relationship in regard to the level of arsenic and health concerns, reducing the standard level of arsenic from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion would theoretically, and this is theoretically only, prevent three cases of bladder cancer and could possibly prevent a handful of deaths from all causes that might possibly be related to arsenic in the United States annually. If a linear relationship exists, even 1 part per billion poses at least some slight health risk.

At the present time, however, there is no clear evidence that there is a linear relationship between arsenic level and health. It is very possible there may be some point that a certain amount of arsenic in the water poses absolutely no health risk. Arsenic is necessary for human life and is present in every person's body. Therefore, 50 parts per billion, 40 parts per billion, 30, or 20 parts per billion could prove to be perfectly safe. We just do not know what that level is.

The cost of lowering this standard from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion has been estimated by the EPA to cost $181 million annually. However, the American Waterworks Association has stated that the cost would actually be $600 million annually with an additional $5 billion in capital outlays to pay for the treatment plants. There is a huge discrepancy, obviously, in these figures.

The EPA told the State of Nebraska's Department of Health to dump extracted arsenic on open fields, as arsenic is nontoxic. However, a short time later the EPA reversed its opinion and said that arsenic extracted from water must be shipped to toxic waste dumps. It does not appear that the EPA has factored the cost of shipping arsenic to toxic waste sites into their cost estimates. It would seem that the Bush administration's decision to delay implementation of standards until further study has been done is warranted. In short, it seems that all of the evidence that we currently have would indicate that an arbitrary level of 10 parts per billion may be excessively low and it is quite likely not based on any sound evidence. Further data from independent sources is clearly warranted.

INTRODUCTION OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PRINTING OF ''ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICANS IN CONGRESS''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, in celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, I proudly rise to introduce a concurrent resolution authorizing the printing of a book entitled ''Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress.''

Each year during the month of May, we celebrate the rich heritage of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans throughout the country, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Congressmen Frank Horton and Norman Mineta, who sponsored legislation celebrating the first official Asian Pacific American Week in 1978. In 1992, Congressman Horton authored legislation expanding the week into a permanent month-long celebration of the proud mosaic of histories and ethnicities of this most diverse national community.

Asian and Pacific Islanders are indeed a diverse constellation of peoples from 40 major subpopulation groups of Pacific Islander Americans including Chamorros, Native Hawaiians and Samoans; Southeast Asian Americans such as Cambodians, Vietnamese, Hmongs and Laotians; East Asian Americans including Chinese, Japanese and Koreans; and South Asian Americans, including Indians and Pakistanis. Our national community boasts the most diverse minority group within the country, comprised of both immigrant and indigenous populations.

The history of Congress includes 33 Asian and Pacific Islander Americans that have served from 1903 to the present. These Members come from backgrounds ranging from Chinese, Chamorro, Filipino, Asian Indian, Japanese, Korean, Hawaiian, and Samoan. Thirteen of these Members were Resident Commissioners from the Philippine Islands during the time it was a territory from 1898 until it became independent in 1946. Currently, there are nine Members serving in the 107th Congress. Amongst them are two Senators, two delegates, and five Representatives.

Delegate Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaole, a Native Hawaiian prince and Member of the Hawaiian royal family, was the first Pacific Islander American elected to Congress. Delegate Kuhio represented the Territory of Hawaii from 1903 to 1923.

Hawaii, not surprisingly being the State with the highest per capita population of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, has a history of many other firsts in Congress. Senator Hiram Fong was the first Chinese American in Congress. Representative PATSY MINK was the first Asian Pacific American woman in Congress. Senator DANIEL K. INOUYE is the first Japanese American and has served in Congress since being elected in 1959 after statehood for Hawaii. Senator DANIEL K. AKAKA is the first U.S. Senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry.

Amongst the other firsts, Representative Dalip Signh Saund of California was the first Asian American U.S. Representative from 1957 to 1963. Guam's first Delegate to Congress, Antonio Borja Won Pat, was the first Chamorro elected in 1973. Delegate Fofo Iosefa Fiti Sunia, the first American Samoan in Congress, was elected in 1981. And Representative Jay Kim was the first Korean American elected to the 103rd Congress.